

# About PT

## NOTES FROM THE EDITOR

Patrick McGreevy

A multi-element design was used to compare the three study methods and corresponding topics. The dependent variable was think-say ideas or facts about the topic during a one minute timing. Two timings were conducted daily on each topic. The timings were followed by approximately 20 minutes spent studying the topic. The study time was equalized at the end of each week.

Each data point on Chart 1 represents an average of two daily timings on think-say ideas about the topic. Notice that the data for each study method and topic are concurrent. As evidenced by the initial data points, the student possessed approximately equal entry-level knowledge about each topic.

Chart 1 indicates that the student's learning with the flashcard method of study and the topic of observational learning was superior in terms of the celeration for both corrects (x2.5) and incorrects(/2.7). The student's final performance under this same condition was again superior in terms of both accuracy (x17) and fluency(17 corrects/ min.). It is important to note, however, that the student's learning and final performance were only slightly less with the essay method of study and the topic of mainstreaming. On the other hand, the student's learning using the flashcard method of study and the topic of observational learning was superior to that demonstrated using the abstracts method of study and the topic of conceptualizations of mental retardation in terms of the celeration for both corrects and incorrects by a factor of x1.7 and x1.8(celeration multipliers), respectively. This same superiority was observed in final performance, in terms of both accuracy(x2) and fluency(x2)[frequency multipliers].

These findings suggest that, for this student, simply rereading abstracts, a traditional method of study, was not as effective as saying author-fact flashcards or writing and rereading an organized essay. Replications with additional students and topics will determine if the observed relationships maintain across subjects and content.

### Reference

Bower, B. & Orgel, R. (1980) To err is divine. *Journal of Precision Teaching*, 2, 3-9.

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I would like to encourage all of you to submit Chart-sharing articles and manuscripts to JPT. Consider the possible benefits for children of your sharing a successful intervention with our readers. The cost is several hours of your time. If it takes you four hours to prepare the article and four children are helped, the cost-benefit ratio is one student helped/one hour spent. I would like to suggest that this is an effective, efficient, and loving way to spend time.

Also, help your teachers, and (yes) even the children, prepare articles. Remember, most of the discoveries of Precision Teaching have originated with a suggestion from a classroom teacher and with a child's chart. An article prepared and submitted by a child would receive the immediate attention of the editorial board.

Information on the Fifth International Precision Learning/ Precision Teaching Conference is included in this issue. I strongly encourage you to consider attending this conference. Kathleen Liberty, Owen White and many others are working hard to make this an informative and enjoyable conference.

### TEACHER TO TEACHER

Caryn Robbins

I had a chance to do a little reading this summer and picked up William Least Heat Moon's **Blue Highways**. Along his philosophical journey, Moon makes an observation which sums up a part of our philosophy as Precision Teachers (where Moon says "man", read "person"):

The annals of scientific discovery full of errors that opened new worlds: Bell was working on an apparatus to aid the deaf when he discovered the telephone; Edison was tinkering with the telephone when he invented the phonograph. If a man can keep alert and imaginative, an error is a possibility, a chance at something new to him, wandering and wondering are part of the same process, he is most in error, whenever he quits exploring.

Precision Teachers view errors as possibilities. They change them from failures into learning opportunities. Few other teaching strategies have held this philosophy. Open learning classrooms have allowed children to learn through a trial and error process when engaging in experimental and enrichment activities. The more structured strategies have moved toward errorless learning. It's as if you can make errors when you're having fun with learning, but when you are seriously learning, you should not make a mistake.

It is much easier to believe that errors are learning opportunities than it is to live as if they are. After all, when you make a mistake in balancing your checkbook, the bank sends you an overdraft notice, not congratulations for a new learning opportunity. It would be nice to change this world view for our students. We'd like them NOT to feel the upset-stomach-red-faced-crawl-in-a-hole-and-die response to errors. We would like them to learn to feel what we believe.

I have been amazed when two and one-half year old children enter my classroom and have already learned not to make mistakes, by not doing anything. Since it's much easier to change a behavior, than to create one, my first goal for many children is to learn to make an error and not see it as a failure. It's a very important skill to have when a child is handicapped and will spend his/her life making errors in other people's eyes. I have not found a magical way to teach this skill. My primary strategy has been to talk to the children about my own errors, and tell them what I have learned. Many children look somewhat shocked to hear an adult admit a mistake, though they are used to seeing us make them.

#### REFERENCE

Moon, W.L.H. (1984) **Blue Highways**. New York: Ballantine Books, pp.223-224.

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#### AROUND THE STANDARD CELEBRATION CHART

Patrick McGreevy

In the last issue, I suggested truncating (cutting) proportionally the Standard Celebration Chart, when submitting manuscripts to journals with a format smaller than 8 1/2 x 11 inches. I further suggested requesting

that the journal print the charts without reduction or enlargement.

In order to encourage this process and thereby encourage the submission of Chart-based manuscripts to other journals, I am preparing black, camera-ready copies of the four daily charts suggested in Table 1 of my last column (last issue, page 44). Just like the charts printed in **JPT**, these charts do not contain a grid.

These charts will be available at a nominal cost. Just send me a note describing which of the four charts and how many of each chart you need. I will send them to you, along with a note specifying the charges for the charts and postage. I would suggest that you specify at least the number of charts you actually plan to use, since most copy machines, even expensive models, produce a copy that is not the same size as the original.